



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR'S HMONG RESETTLEMENT ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 412 EAST
October 13, 2004 (10:00 AM to 1:00 PM)

Members Present: Kaying Xiong (Chair), Andrew Benedetto, Ann Wondergem, Bee Xiong, Bounning Her, ChaSong Yang, Cheryl McIlquham, Christa Xiong, John Medinger, Sharon Hunter, Shoua Xiong, Shwaw Vang, Ker Vang, Mary Ann Jackson, Melissa Borth, Nell Anderson, Peter Yang, Phyllis Birmingham, Susan Gundlach, Thai Vue, Yee Moua.

Others, including Guest Speakers: Jo Anna Richard (DWD), Brian Pahnke (DPI), Savitri Tsering (DHFS), Karen Fink (U.S. DHHS), Susan Levy (DWD), Ying Lee (DWD), Ka Vang (Chippewa Valley Technical College), Charles Vue (UW-Eau Claire), Kevin Lor (Sheboygan Hmong MAA), Chris Vandall (WTCS), Jere Boyle (Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago).

Members Not Present: Dan Idzikowski, Joe Vang, Hoyu Sayaovong, Jim Schramm, ThaiYing Lee, Yang Max Kue.

Welcome and Introductions - Kaying Xiong (Chair)

Kaying gave a welcome and thank you to members of the Task Force for taking the time from other responsibilities and pursuits to be at the meeting once again. She appreciated all the subcommittee groups' efforts that they have put into the Task Force charge, including phone conferences and other activities. She believes that the DWD Secretary and the Governor also appreciated their work as well.

Updates - Susan Levy, Chief, Immigrant Integration Section, BMRLS, DWD

As we all know, September was a very busy month in the resettlement of new refugees. We have a total of 1,659 new refugees who have arrived, including 1,732 Hmong from Thailand. There were 148 W-2 cases by the end of September. Even though no outcomes have been reported in the system yet, a number of individuals have already obtained jobs. In terms of federal funding, DWD has submitted a grant application under the ORR Unanticipated Arrivals—Category 2 to develop and implement a comprehensive orientation for the new refugees. The budget requested is \$445,000, which is more than the ceiling ORR anticipated to award under the grant announcement. The state's proposed initiative was based on lessons learned from the last refugee resettlement. There is a need for everyone to check their archives for any materials used in the past and send to the state refugee office for distribution. Besides DWD, WTCS and a number of local agencies have also applied. In addition to this, DWD is

looking at the next funding opportunity in February to address other needs, such as skills training, and is encouraging the Task Force and others to do the same.

Communication and Budget Process - JoAnna Richard, Executive Assistant, Office of the Secretary, DWD

DWD operates a number of programs. Besides W-2 and refugee services, the Department also has unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, equal rights programs, and others. There are things that need to be brought to the attention of the Task Force, including a couple of suggestions that are helpful to be included in their "to do" list.

There is a need to get the good news story out to the public---the success of the resettlement. The Gannett paper has been very good in doing that. But there is a need to do more. If there is anything the Secretary or the Governor can do to help, please let them know.

September was a very busy month with refugee resettlement activities. However, there was a decline in W-2 cases for the month statewide. The W-2 agencies that have been working throughout the state, including Ann Wondergem and others in the Lake Shore areas, have really done a tremendous job to get the refugee operations going and integrated into the W-2 system for quick workforce attachment and employment opportunities. These are positive news story and there is a need to continue to talk.

On the budget process, the Governor's 2005-07 biennial budget process actually started in the summer. DWD has submitted its biennial budget request to the Department of Administration, the budget arm for the Governor. It includes a request for continued funding of Refugee Family Strengthening programs. During the months of September through December, the Governor will be putting together his budget. So for the items that the Committees of the Task Force have talked about and think need to be brought to the attention of the Governor, DWD will be glad to advance them so that the Governor knows about them. Most of DWD's money comes from federal sources, and Wisconsin's congressional delegation has been unbelievably helpful, including the Governor's staff in DC. DWD sent all of the state's applications for grants to them so that they can advocate within the Department of Health and Human Services for Wisconsin. Now that the congressional delegation is back to the state campaigning or meeting with constituents, it is a good opportunity to thank them for their efforts. Sen. Kohl has been very important on the Appropriations Committee in the Senate. Congressman Obey has been equally important in the House in his minority leader role for which he plays in the Committee on Appropriations. It is important that we thank them for what they have done for Wisconsin.

Also, the Governor will hold a session on Hmong issues for Hmong leaders next week on the 20th. He wanted Hmong leaders to come to town and meet on issues that come before them. He will also have a reception at the Executive Residence later in the afternoon.

There are opportunities within state government that we should seek when the moment is right. One of them is within the Department of Commerce now that they are putting together a five-year plan in their community development block grant process and in the housing process--all the HUD money they receive. Recommendations were made by Secretary Gassman to include a section on Hmong services--to make sure that government is responsive to the needs of the communities. Their deadline is the end of this month (October) and we only have a couple of weeks to work on this.

W-2 agencies have been really helpful. Most of them have completed their plans to DWD and we are trying to get as much money freed up as possible to get them out to the communities. As things develop and caseload continues to increase, the Department will see if more money can be allocated for those communities that are seeing increases.

English Language Learners and Third Friday Count - Brian Pahnke, Assistant State Superintendent for Finance and Management, DPI

A Summary of 2004-05 Transfer of Service Exemptions Granted by DPI Related to English Language Learners was distributed. He thanked the Task Force for the opportunity to present some information before them. DPI has been working closely with school districts throughout the state related to the newly arriving students, especially Hmong students in particular, as well as others that are still coming to the state. That third Friday in September was very important for school districts in Wisconsin to identify the number of students they have in their school districts. Their revenue cap and funding formulae highly depend upon their enrollments, or number counted on that third Friday. The number of enrollments is so important. It sets a process by which school districts receive state aid.

State Superintendent Burmaster has proposed in her budget for the next two years, which was submitted to the Governor a few weeks ago, to include an increase in bilingual-bicultural aid in Wisconsin. She recommended in her budget that, for those who have to have bilingual programs, the reimbursement rate be increased to 30 percent. About 42 Districts are eligible for those dollars. There are certainly many more districts in Wisconsin that are providing the same services for children whose English are not their first language. These may well be Hmong students in some districts that don't necessarily meet the threshold of 20 Hmong students to be eligible. Additional funding is also being proposed for those districts.

Mental Health Issues Identified Through Initial Health Screenings – Savitri Tsering, TB Elimination and Refugee Health Coordinator, Wisconsin Tuberculosis Program, DHFS

Two conference calls were conducted last week with refugee screening providers and 17 of 21 providers participated. Of the 17 providers, at least nine indicated that they are doing basic mental health screenings using a variety of tools that they are comfortable with for preliminary screening.

Some health screening providers indicated that they have seen a few Hmong refugees coming with apparent mental health issues. Most of these individuals also had serious physical health problems.

Most providers felt that, because of the significant adjustments that take place after arrival and the "honey moon" phase that refugees often go through when they first come, the best time to conduct a proper mental health assessment will be during on-going care, not during initial screening.

Also during the conference calls, screening providers have screened more than half of those that have come.

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago---Jere Boyle

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago will be sponsoring a conference on December 9, 2004 at the Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton focussing on financial access for the Hmong and Lao populations. He is now in the process of going around the state meeting with MAA leaders, as many as possible. The Bank has set up a national center for the study of access to financial services for immigrant populations.

Housing

Ann Wondergem and ChaSong Yang mentioned that Sheboygan's Mayor has developed a proposal to address issues related to housing. The proposal has been submitted to WHEDA. A copy is attached.

Task Force Committee Meetings and Reports

Committee meetings were held to further discuss the issues identified and to prioritize their issues and recommendations. Each committee was to decide on priority issues that would be submitted to the Governor to include in his budget. The report of each committee is attached.

A workgroup was established to write up the Task Force Report. The group consists of all Committee Chairs. DWD staff will help provide logistical and other technical support.

At the meeting, Task Force members asked for information regarding labor statistics and market information. This can be found at:

<http://dwdworkweb/dws/research.htm>

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held in Madison on December 7, 2004 at GEF I (Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development), 201 E. Washington Avenue, Room D203, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Attachments